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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ALUMNI OF THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

IN

ST. PETER'S CHURCH,

ON

FRIDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 8TH, 1858,

BY

SAMUEL H. TURNER, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LEARNING AND INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE,
ON OCCASION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ORIGINAL
APPOINTMENT.

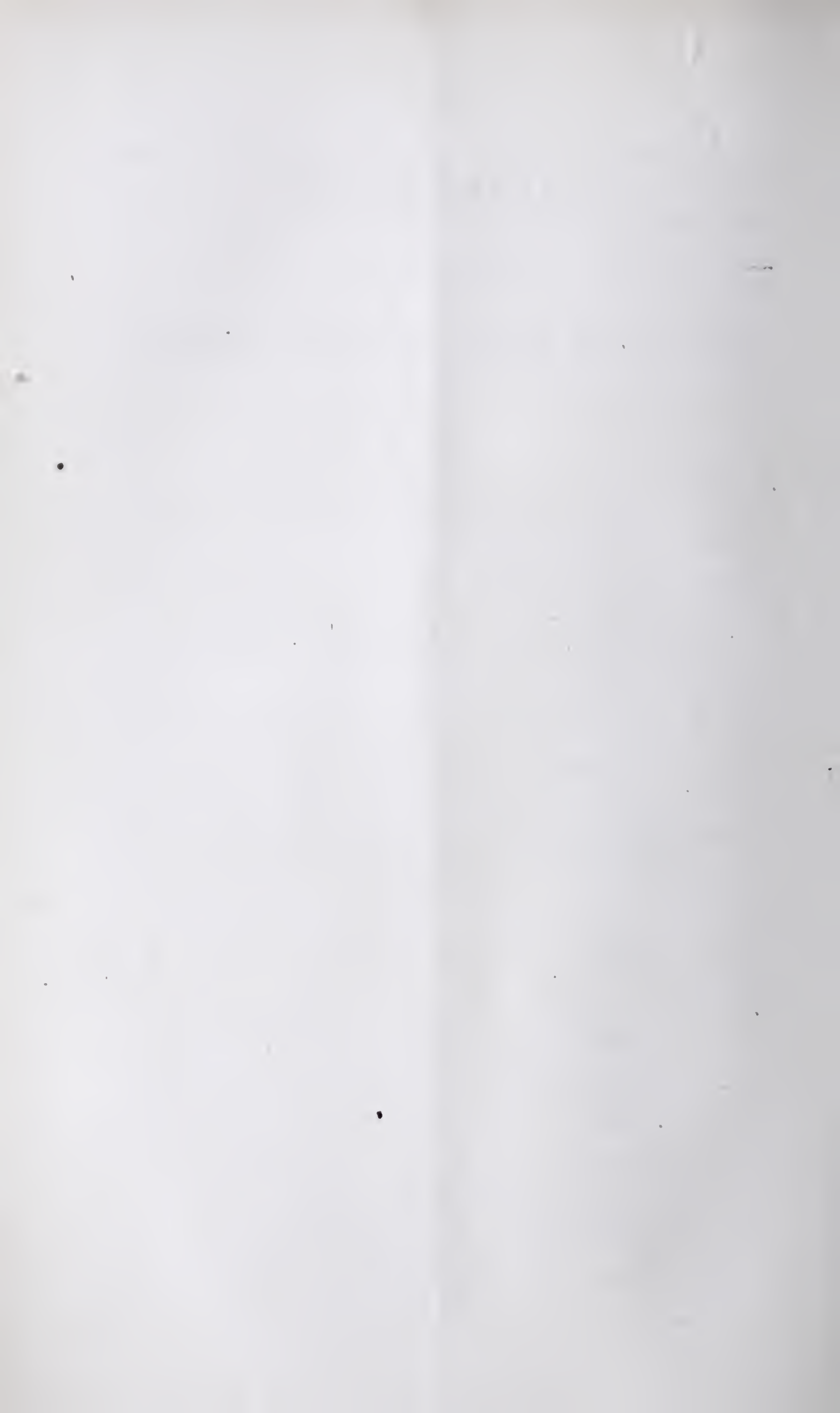
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Extract from the Report of a Committee, appointed by the General Convention of 1817, presented to that of 1820, on the subject of the Theological School. See PROCEEDINGS, relating to the organization of the General Theological Seminary, &c., compiled and arranged by a member of the Board of Trustees, the REV. A. B. HART, New-York: DANIEL DANA, Jr., 637 Broadway, 1854, pp. 19, 20.

The Committee "met in the City of Philadelphia, on the 7th and 8th of October, 1818; present, Bishop White, Bishop Hobart, Bishop Croes, Dr. Wharton, and William Meredith, Esq." At this Meeting, among other resolutions, the following was adopted:

"*Resolved*, That when the funds of the Institution admit, the Rev. Charles Henry Wharton, D. D., be appointed Professor of Systematic Theology, and that the Rev. Samuel F. Jarvis be now appointed Professor of Biblical Learning, and the Rev. Samuel H. Turner, Professor of Historic Theology."

"At a Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the General Theological Seminary, held in the City of New-York, December 19, 1821," among other resolutions then passed, it was

"*Resolved*, that the Rev. Samuel H. Turner, D. D., being a Professor in the General Theological Seminary, heretofore established by the General Convention, be Professor of Biblical Learning and the Interpretation of Scripture." Id. pp. 121, 122.



SEMINARY, *June, 23, 1858.*

To the Alumni of the General Theological Seminary:

REV. AND BELOVED BRETHREN,—

On the 8th day of October, 1818, I received the honor of an appointment to a professorship in the General Theological Seminary, with which, about three years afterwards, the Diocesan Seminary of New-York was united; and thus was constituted the present Institution. It is nearly forty years, therefore, that I have held, under the general authority of the Church, the responsible office of an instructor of candidates for the ministry.

With what emotions I look back through the long vista of years to the commencing point of this course of time, I could not tell even were I disposed to make the effort. I will only express my gratitude to God, for having protracted my life in this position in his Church so many years. Feeling it to be both a duty and a privilege to consecrate the recollection of so marked a period of life, I purpose, God willing, to commemorate the occasion by the delivery of a public address on the evening of the 8th of October next, at St. Peter's Church in this city. The Rector, who has always courteously acceded to the requests of the Faculty to hold Commencements there, has kindly accorded its use for the intended purpose.

Were it reasonable for me to look forward to any considerable time of continuance in the present state, I should have waited until the semi-centennial anniversary. But, as it is more than probable that the position which I now hold will ere then be filled by some more efficient successor, it seems most advisable not to let the fortieth year pass over; and especially as that number is even more strongly marked than the other in the historical statements of the Book of God. I, therefore, respectfully invite those Alumni to whom it may not be inconvenient, from distant residence or any other cause, to be present on the occasion referred to.

The services will commence at 7 P. M.; and, after their conclusion, I shall be happy to welcome my reverend brethren, the Alumni, to my house.

With affectionate regard, and many very pleasant reminiscences, I remain,

Most truly and respectfully,

Your friend and brother in the Lord,

SAMUEL H. TURNER.

NEW-YORK, *June 24th*, 1858, }
St. John Baptist. }

TO THE REV. S. H. TURNER, D. D.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—Your invitation to the Alumni was received yesterday, and read at our meeting; and I am instructed, on the part of the Association, to reply.

Your proposal to address your former pupils on the approaching 40th Anniversary of your appointment as their Instructor in our beloved Home and School of Christ's Religion, was one which moved and deeply affected us all.

We think, that services such as yours have been cannot be too highly valued; and everywhere and at all times our remembrances of you are full of gratitude and affectionate respect. That you may continue for many years to fill your accustomed place, is our common hope and desire; and the thought of that separation to which you allude in your letter, and which the lapse of time makes ultimately inevitable, is one which we cannot entertain but with profound regret.

It is, therefore, with feelings of uncommon interest, that we accept your invitation to meet you in St. Peter's Church on the 8th of October next, and afterwards at your own house; and in the mean season we beg you to accept the assurances of our warm affection, our sincere respect, and our common wishes and prayers that your valued and honored life may yet, through the goodness of our Heavenly Father, be spared to us, to the Seminary, and to the Church at large, through many more years of usefulness and happiness

I remain, on the part of the Alumni,

Very respectfully and faithfully,

MORGAN DIX,

Recording Secretary.



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A D D R E S S .

*Reverend Brethren of the Alumni and others,
and respected hearers in general :*

SOME time in the year 1810, a highly esteemed rector of this city delivered a discourse on a Wednesday evening at St. Paul's Church in Philadelphia, of which the Rev. Dr. Pilmore was then Pastor. The mind of a young member of that church was then very forcibly impressed, partly by the preacher's representations and partly by his own consciousness and experience, with the consideration that great benefits would accrue to the Church of his own affections and those of his forefathers, from the establishment of some school, in which instruction in the Scriptures and theology in general, with suitable preparation for the ministry, might be obtained. The thought dwelt in the mind of the hearer while listening to the man of God, who a few years afterwards was consecrated to the office of Bishop in the Church of Christ. The venerated RIGHT REV. RICHARD CHANNING MOORE has gone to his rest, and his then youthful auditor now stands before you.

Forty years ago the honor of a professorship in the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church was conferred upon me. I entered on my duties the following spring, along with the Rev. Dr. Jarvis, who, even at that early period, had acquired the distinction of high scholarship, and who was entrusted with the instruction in general, the department of "historic Theology"* excepted. The following year the Institution was removed to New-Haven, and subsequently, by a union with the Diocesan Seminary of New-York, the present General School of the Prophets was established. Since that period my official relation has imposed upon me the duty, and blessed me with the privilege, of endeavoring to teach the Scriptures.

What thoughts and feelings must necessarily arise within me, when I look back on the series of years since the original appointment, and glance at various circumstances of widely different kinds which appear in the long vista, I could not possibly express were my desire to do so ever so earnest. But to one sentiment I must give utterance, inasmuch as its avowal is demanded by duty, that namely of devout gratitude to God, for having so long sustained an unworthy servant in so important a position, by granting him health and many other blessings, and for enabling him to appear on this 40th Anniversary before his friends and former pupils, and to address them

* This was the original title of the Professorship of Ecclesiastical History.

in the name of our common Master and Lord. "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."

The more ordinary period of recalling any interesting event or circumstance in the history of communities, either civil or ecclesiastical, or in the lives of individuals, whether political or religious, differs from that of the present occasion. The time of a centennial anniversary, and of a semi-centennial jubilee, and half the last-mentioned period, are dates which are registered in the archives of nations, and still more deeply in the hearts of individuals. The longest extends far beyond the ordinary space allotted to man. In reference to the speaker, the shortest was passed some time ago; and before the intermediate period shall arrive, it is most probable that his position will be filled by a successor, who, it is to be hoped, will be a much more efficient instructor. In sanction of the date which now calls us together, the historical records of sacred Scripture may be appealed to. Forty is in its pages a consecrated number. "Forty days and forty nights was Moses, the man of God, in the holy mount." Forty years did the Israelites wander in the wilderness. "Forty days and forty nights" did the prophet Elijah go "in the strength" of one meal, made on "a cake and a cruse of water." Forty days were allowed to the Ninevites for their repentance and conversion. And, not unnecessarily to multiply instances, "Forty days and forty nights" did the Saviour of the world fast in the wilderness before the arch fiend assaulted him with the three recorded temptations; and Forty days was he occasionally "seen of his disciples"

after his resurrection and previously to his ascension into heaven.

Reverend brethren of the Alumni : you, as well as the speaker, must call to mind with no small gratification, that the Institution to which we belong numbers among those who were connected with it in the very closest intimacy ten Right Reverend Fathers of the Church. Of these venerated men four were instructors.* One of them will long live in the memories and affections of its members, both on account of his generous kindness as a friend, and of his keenness of discernment, promptitude of action, self-sacrificing energy and ardor. He has gone to his reward, and his works do follow him. Another, who threw the weight of his character and influence in favor of the Seminary as originally organized, and, during the short period of its continuance in his diocese, gave it the benefit of his personal attention, still, by the good providence of God, maintains his patriarchal position as head of the House of Bishops, with the same characteristic mildness, urbanity, benevolence, judgment and Christian piety, which have ever distinguished his ministerial course. I refer to these two Right Rev. Fathers, because their example and action spread over a past age of the Church a lustre on which the memory's look delights to linger. And it must also be a gratification to you to hear, as it certainly is to me to be permitted to say, that seven of our present Bishops were

* I refer to the Right Rev. Bishops Hobart, Brownell, B. T. Onderdonk, and Whittingham.

students of the General Theological Seminary;* and that two of them belonged to the same original class, all the members of which, with one exception, are still living, and engaged in the cause of "the Great Bishop of our souls."† I might say too, that some of the most energetic and useful clergymen in various sections of our Church, from Maine to Florida, and from its Eastern to its Western boundary, were introduced into the ministerial "Courts of the Lord's House," through the halls of the General Theological Seminary.

But it is not my purpose to give anything like a history of the Institution. The time has not yet come for that development, nor would the present occasion be a suitable one to attempt to make it. Doubtless I might relate matters on this topic which would interest, and even amuse, and perhaps indeed surprise not a few by their novelty. Certainly I might say much which would gratify the old patrons of the Institution, as well as its later friends. And yet truth would compel me to say some things, the recollection of which is by no means agreeable, and the results positively painful. A candid history is never marked by a

* Their names are here given not in the order of consecration, but of their connection with the Seminary; Bishops Doane and Eastburn, Whitehouse, Whittingham, H. Potter, Kip, A. Lee.

† The two Bishops referred to are those of New-Jersey and Massachusetts. The first class, under the supervision of the Rev. Dr. Jarvis and myself, during the greater part of the years 1819 and 1820, while the original General Seminary continued in this city, consisted of six members. Their names are as follows: Lawson Carter, James P. F. Clarke, George Washington Doane, Benjamin Dorr, Manton Eastburn, and William Hinckley Mitchell. With the exception of the last, who died in the Spring of 1836 in South Carolina, where he exercised his ministry with true devotion and earnestness, all are still living, and well known in the Church.

suppressio veri. It is neither my province nor design to stand forth as the open defender of whatever has at any time been done in relation to the Seminary, whether by its legitimate authorities, by its individual instructors, or (least of all) by some of its members. The wisest of men may occasionally aberrate from the most desirable course, and the best intentioned teachers may sometimes miss the true point of knowledge. Both experience and observation authorize the remark, that in conveying instruction to others, the honest and candid mind instructs itself, and modifies or alters its views in proportion as it advances in knowledge and wisdom. The man who, from an early to a late period of life, retains a stereotyped system of doctrine unchanged in any particular, however confessedly unessential to catholic truth, which in its very nature is only general, gives no doubtful indication of mental inactivity and self-satisfaction. "Never too old to learn," is a common saying of great practical worth. In some respects, therefore, the sentiments of a competent instructor will occasionally change, and consequently his teachings will change; and this, however steady and unaltered may have always been his soundness in all important points of divine revelation. All this, then, being allowed, I must still express what I feel it my duty publicly to declare, that this Institution has been the subject of misapprehension, and consequently of occasional misrepresentation. Erroneous tendencies and sentiments, which some few young men of undisciplined minds, of extravagant prepossessions, brought up almost always out of the precincts of the Protestant Episcopal Church, which is distinguished for its conserva-

tive character, introduced on their admission, together with the extremes which naturally result from such precedents, have been charged upon the Seminary itself; and perversions from among the class of men referred to have been ascribed to instructions here given, while they are traceable, in a good degree, to antecedent personal inclinations, or disappointment arising from weak expectations which never can be realized. Where such sentiments and tendencies have taken a strong hold, the soundest instruction makes little or no impression. Private notions of individuals, regarded, partly from ignorance and in no slight degree from agreeable self-satisfaction, as promulged doctrines of the Church, become incorporated in the understanding and the heart. The cherished feeling gets the better of argument, and objections openly announced and advocated are tenaciously maintained, notwithstanding whatever may be said in their confutation. The language of a nameless pervert—"He's never going to convince me of such a view," may stand as illustrative of the state of mind referred to. Fathers and brethren, who are in any way connected with the Seminary, suffer its forty years' servant to speak his mind plainly and candidly. What I desire is this: That the establishment, to which I have devoted most of my life, may become more thoroughly understood than it is at present, or indeed ever has been; and that by the Church at large, and especially by its leading characters of various classes, positions, and theological views; that it be occasionally visited during its term time, and its instructions become well known, carefully marked, and rightly appreciated; that thus opportunity may be afforded for useful

improvement, founded on personal observation, and for approach towards a high standard of excellence ; and, moreover, that if anything is wrong, it may be proved to be so and corrected, and what is right be sustained and encouraged. Thus we may ultimately rejoice not only in a sound but also in a prosperous General Seminary of the Church, may view with thankfulness a divine tree of firm, solid growth, presenting a bold and manly trunk, not disfigured by the excrescences of High Church or Low, but producing the fruits of truth in all its ramifications of doctrine, and among all its bright foliage of practical religion. Then may we as a body delight in an institution distinguished for its comprehensive moderatism ; an institution which shall co-operate in handing down forever the memories and principles of the judicious Hooker of England, and of our own ecclesiastical Washington, the wise, noble, and most venerable Bishop White, whom, if ungratefully I forget, “let my right hand forget her cunning,” and my heart cease to beat its natural impulses.

The remarks which I purpose to make on the present occasion are intended to bear upon the topics of preparation for the ministry, and performance of its duties. May the divine Instructor, Guide, and Assistant in every spiritual good, rightly direct the mind of the speaker, and suitably impress the understanding and heart of the hearer.

“The harvest is great, but the laborers are few.” This has always been, in a greater or less degree, the fact in the Church of Christ. The number of the workmen

has never been proportionate to the size of "the field," which the Master himself tells us "is the world." Hence it is that those who do sincerely desire a general cultivation, will be disposed to aid in increasing the number of the sowers, and true Christians will gladly devote their offspring to a service so useful and remunerative. But, like the parents of Moses, let them see that theirs are "proper" children; and, after "bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," let them carefully try their probable fitness for the work. There is danger lest the habit of looking forward to the clerical profession as that for which parents or guardians have destined a youth, may gradually lead him to consider it merely as his business, the station which he is to fill as best he may. His opening character should give promise of right affections and conduct; his education should be decidedly religious. He should be taught to know and value rightly the true principles of Christianity, and those of the Church whose ministry is his ultimate destination.

And thus also with regard to the youth who may abandon the secular employment which engaged his early years, in order to devote himself to God's service in his Church. Care should be taken lest a want of expected success or some dissatisfaction in such employment, be among the governing motives which turn his attention to the ministry. Time should be given for self-examination, and for a thorough test of sincerity. In the present age especially, when so much influence is allowed to excitement, there is danger lest young men, accustomed to the

ordinary pursuits of life, should, in the fervor produced by the first impressions of religion, too hastily conclude that they are called to the sacred office. Most undoubtedly the ruling motive in all cases should be a supreme love to God, and an earnest desire to promote the salvation of men.

The first element in the aggregate of preparation is that which affects the moral and religious character. The ministerial office was intended by its Divine Author to deal with men in the way of instruction and argument, so as to present the true principles of belief and action, and to inculcate their practical operation. This can never be done effectively, except by those on whose internal character these principles have had their legitimate influence. No one can teach properly what he does not himself rightly know. And religious principles, to be rightly known, must be duly appreciated. It is not enough that the intellect be well informed, that the truths of religion, both natural and revealed, be carefully examined, investigated in their standard authorities, collated with each other, profoundly thought over and reasoned upon, safely deposited in the memory and mind, so as to qualify their possessor to evolve, expound and defend them against every cavil. All this may be done as a matter of interesting research to the intellectual man, and the whole process and its results are of very great importance in forming a partial capability. Yet such capability may be acquired, without the essential element of ministerial character. As it is true that "with the heart man believeth unto justification," so is it equally true of inward preparation for the ministry, that by the

heart all that the mind can comprehend and acquire must be properly appreciated, and, so far as the topics respectively admit, internally experienced. How can a man suitably unfold the goodness of God to the human family, especially as developed in the plan of redemption, how can he rightly display the love of Christ in "giving himself a ransom for all," how can he properly speak to his fellow-men of the blessed influence of that Holy Spirit, who calls celestial light to penetrate into and illumine the moral depth of the void, unformed, confused, and miserably chaotic soul of the sinner, unless he has himself not only understood something of that goodness and love and sacred influence, but has also felt the same in his inner being, and experienced in some degree their life-giving and life-preserving effects in his whole moral and religious nature? Without this, his intellectual announcements may be compared to the operations of a musical instrument which is merely mechanical. The curiously wrought machine, the product of extraordinary artistic ingenuity and skill, may produce, by means of its complicated internal organism, forcible bursts of harmony, or softest breathings of melodious sweetness. But each series of sound will have its own dull uniformity and sameness, unmodified by any change adapted to the character of the strain. The result may be surprise, gratification, even amazement, in the hearer. But let the experienced living player, who feels the beauty of the melody, or rises in his inward emotions with the swelling harmony of some sublime composition, handle the proper instrument, and under his touch each note becomes a living messenger, telegraphing to the hearer the inward emotion

of the performer and his sympathy with the music, as he proclaims in loud harmonious sounds, or whispers in the gentlest of zephyrs, the thoughts and feelings of the composer. Thus also will it be with the rightly prepared preacher of the word. The heart of the hearer will reciprocate the pulsations of that of the speaker.

It is not to be doubted that mischievous errors have grown up in connection with the principle just affirmed and illustrated. Individual feeling, frequently extravagant, and of no higher origin than physical temperament, has been substituted for that cordial reception of divine truth which makes it the governing principle of the whole man, interesting the affections as well as the mind, and causing its possessor to rejoice in the blessedness of the Gospel. Hence some have run to the opposite extreme, deriding the idea of experimental religion as nothing but a fancy of the wild fanatic or over ardent enthusiast. But here, as in many other cases, *medio tutissimus ibis*. The extravagances which mark certain detailed accounts of certain professed experiences, like all abuses, prove nothing against legitimate use. True religion, in its influence on such a creature as man, cannot possibly be limited to external operations. Indeed these very operations do themselves depend upon the inward thought, purpose and feeling, which prompt, direct and control them. Antecedently to them there must be reflection, a sense of interest, of propriety and duty. And these can only be produced by an inward consciousness of the import of divine truth, in its bearing on the man's own condition both here and here-

after. In other words, its influence, which, as we learn from Scripture, is brought to bear on him by the grace of the Spirit, must be experienced. If it be allowable to call that experimental philosophy, which, from a fair and full investigation of all the facts that can be established, deduces its principles and laws, and applies them to the explanation of phenomena of nature ; there is no reason why that series of influences and facts which is recognized in the views of Scripture, and attested, so far as each is susceptible of attestation, by the correspondent operations of the Christian mind in various states of pious exercise, may not be called experimental religion. In the one case, the facts are external, and must be judged of by the senses and reason ; in the other, they are inward, and can only be rightly understood and appreciated by the individual. Their reality, however, is sufficiently proved to himself by his own consciousness, and to others by the concurrent testimony of multitudes.

I would lay it down therefore as a true principle, that such an inward conscious experience of the influence of the Christian religion on the mind and heart, differing as it may and doubtless does in degree in various individuals, is nevertheless essential to a due preparation for the Gospel ministry. And such a consciousness is doubtless implied in the solemn interrogatory which the Church puts to every applicant for orders : “Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministry ?” Most certainly the answer, “I trust so,” cannot be honestly given, unless the pre-

dominant influential motive is a supreme love to God and a sincere desire to promote the salvation of men. Let every one who thinks of aiming at the sacred ministry seriously read the seventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Let him ask himself whether he can in some considerable degree enter into the Apostle's description of a thoughtful man, whose mind is gradually turning from a natural legal state of condemnation to an evangelical condition of justification and acceptance with God. He may not indeed be able fully to appreciate all the detail of feeling and avowal which the inspired author puts into the mouth of his personified character. Yet, if he has a right perception of man's natural state before God, and of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus from condemnation to justification and from sin to holiness, he will perceive enough with which his own experience accords, and will heartily join the author in his ascription of praise: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

But the preparation of the heart and affections is not to be regarded as a substitute for that of a competent intellectual faculty. Desire of being useful must be accompanied by sufficient natural ability. The Church expects of all her candidates such a measure of intelligence, and such habits of patient attention, as may enable them to form and communicate clear conceptions of all parts of the Christian system. A proper study of theology requires therefore a sufficient preparatory discipline of mind. It demands the same mental endowments as are called for in cultivating any other science: ability to comprehend,

connect and compare abstract ideas—such a degree of discrimination as is sufficient to enable one to judge of the characteristics of truth and falsehood, and to separate the one from the other — a perception of truth, acquired or strengthened by culture—and a memory sufficiently clear to call up, without confusion or error, the knowledge needed for daily use. Hence the discipline of academical or collegiate study is exceedingly important, not so much for the knowledge acquired, as for the exercise of the faculties, and the drawing out of natural powers, which constitute the very essence of education. In the present state of society, a general acquaintance with history and science is absolutely essential, in order to repel the widely spread yet entirely unfounded objections, which have been most illogically drawn from certain portions of the Bible and certain well ascertained natural facts. The more profoundly investigations into nature in general and the characteristics and mental and physical developments of the human race in particular are made, the more accurately are the two great divine volumes of natural and revealed instruction found to correspond. While, on the one hand, the natural facts are to be positively demonstrated, on the other, the scriptural representations bearing on such facts are to be thoroughly understood ; and imperfection in both these respects, and especially the latter, is the crumbling foundation of the mass of skeptical difficulties. If the many instances which occur in the Old Testament of the Hebrew word for “beginning” in the first verse of Genesis, had been carefully examined in their grammatical connection, or the result of such exami-

nation become universally known and conceded, and if the principle which moulds the graphical representations of the inspired writer had exercised its proper practical influence, the objections from ascertained facts of geology had never been heard of. Let the defenders of revealed truth carry out in act the true Protestant principle of appeal to the Scriptures in their original tongues, and let him settle the meaning by correct acquaintance with their idioms and usages ; and, in proportion as he advances, he will find that the strongest evidence of revealed truth lies within its own depths. A capability and inclination to do this are demanded of all, who intend boldly to maintain the authority of God's most holy word.

Here I will venture to say that if every one, before entering on the study of divinity with the view of preparing for the ministry, were to spend a year after graduating from some good college chiefly in reviewing his past studies, and were also to make himself so familiar with the Greek of the New Testament as to be able to understand and analyze it grammatically with ease and accuracy *ad aperturam libri*, and were to acquire such an acquaintance with the Hebrew of the Old as to read without difficulty the historical portions of the Pentateuch, his Seminary course in one year would raise him very far above the ordinary standard, even that which in many cases is hardly attained in three. Then no time would be lost in acquiring elementary knowledge or mental discipline ; the foundation would have been solidly laid, and the already practised workman would have nothing to do

but to build up the noble superstructure. Say not that such a course would delay too long the entrance into the sacred office, the active duties of which would consequently be diminished. The greater the capability of the laborer, the more rapid and certain in general are the practical results of his labor. I need hardly say that the ordinary influences of the Spirit which accompany honest and sincere efforts are presumed. Let the greatest of teachers be the living example. The Master himself was "about thirty years of age" when he began his ministry. Let not the disciple refuse to devote time enough to make suitable preparation to trace his footsteps; and let not the Church neglect the duty of making suitable provision for the support and encouragement of every one of its members, whose inmost soul bursts out in the utterance of sincere resolution, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

The preparatory field, in which I have ventured to enter in company with my reverend and respected audience, is too large for a single exercise. Completely to explore its whole extent is impossible. Let me lead on, therefore, into the domain to which it opens.

The office of the sacred ministry is divine in its origin and sacred in its nature. The Saviour himself appointed his Apostles, and commissioned them to "preach his Gospel to every creature." And, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they also authorized other faithful men, and enjoined on them the same duty of establishing the Church of Christ.

And to them and their rightful successors belongs the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." What commission can a human being receive, what position among his fellow-men can he hold, more dignified or more responsible? Let us briefly note some of its weightier duties.

The ministerial office does not, of course, exonerate its possessor from the obligation of those ordinary demands on his attention, which naturally flow from connection with society and various circumstances of social life. But it has also its own peculiar avocations; and things, which other Christian people may do indirectly or occasionally, become on him officially imperative. "Feed my lambs" is the injunction of "the chief Shepherd," which is repeated to the ordinary pastors of the Church by those to whom he had given Apostolic authority. The right supervision of the portion intrusted to his care, with a view to its spiritual growth and preparation for that celestial fold in which it is hereafter to be eternally blessed, is the privilege and the duty of the present shepherd. The healthy and the sick both in body and soul are alike the subjects of his attention, with a view to their restoration, improvement, ultimate soundness of constitution, and consequent enjoyment of life in the fullest sense of the word. And such attention comprehends various practical details. But, as the great object for which the Christian ministry was constituted and sent into the world, was "to preach the Gospel," and to "teach men to observe all things whatsoever the Lord commanded," suffer me, in the want of

time for a complete review, to confine my remarks to this point. What, then, is it to preach the Gospel?

Christian preaching is in contradistinction to the advocacy of the law as a ground of acceptance with God. The New Testament teaches us the utter incompetency of law to remove the penal consequences of sin, and directs us to the Gospel as the only system of religion which can quiet the conscience and afford any foundation for hope. There is no danger that in the present age the Mosaic law shall be resorted to as a method of justification; but it is the same thing in reality when man's salvation is made dependent on his own works. It is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to God's mercy that we are saved, and that not of ourselves, it is his gift."

Christian preaching is also in opposition to all modifications of human philosophy so far as respects radical spiritual amelioration. That there is a God of unbounded holiness—that sin is directly hostile to his character and purposes—that human nature is corrupt, and of course at variance with that of the great and holy one—that such an obliquity ought not and cannot pass unnoticed by "the Judge of all the earth"—are truths which, whether they be discoverable or not by philosophy, human reason, and personal experience, are undoubtedly in accordance with their right principles and teachings. But no system of philosophy could ever tell a man what remedies can restore him to soundness of spiritual state, and make him acceptable to

the great Lord of the universe. It is Christianity alone which solves the difficulty, showing how God can pardon the offender, while at the same time he maintains inviolate the essential justice of his character ; how he can sanctify the sinner, and mould him in assimilation to his own nature. This is what the Christian preacher is to unfold.

We live in an age in which infidel philosophy has thought fit to array itself in the garb of divine truth. The language of God's own book has been employed to convey ideas wholly different from those which were originally intended. The being of God, the all pervading influence of the divinity, the wise and infinitely good and pure and beautiful, exhibiting in all creation and history an ubiquity of presence and action, are modes of speaking which have been employed by men who deny the existence of any eternal, independent, self-conscious, and personal Jehovah. Union with the divinity is indeed essential to the highest purity and excellence. But it is not the attainment of personal truth and holiness, uniting in some moderate measure the creature with the ever infinitely superior Creator. It is a union which merges all individuality and consequently all personal responsibility in the universal and the infinite, and therefore is resolvable into a sort of pantheism. Inspiration is indeed avowed ; but it is the sublimity of the poet, the genius of the artist, the enthusiasm of the orator or musician ; not an influence coming from a personal divine agent, teaching the mind divine truth and moulding the heart after the divine image. The spiritual union of God and man is a vague connection of divinity with hu-

manity as a whole, a something undefinable, if not unintelligible. And this claims to be philosophy, the more profound in proportion as it is "hard to be understood." It is not metaphysical abstraction or transcendental idealism which is to form the subject of the Christian teacher's instructions. The influence which such attempts have had, in various periods of the Church, on scriptural exposition and ecclesiastical doctrine, has been positively mischievous. Oriental duality, Platonism, Aristotelian philosophy, metaphysical ratiocinations or assumptions, and various efforts to penetrate into matters beyond the ken of human and perhaps indeed of all created intellect, have been applied to the popular language of Scripture, which has consequently been made to speak the complicated and obscure dogmas of man rather than the simple teachings of his Maker and Redeemer. Let the preacher make known to his hearers the doctrines of the Gospel as they appear in the written word, even should such a course subject him to the contempt of the ignorant and self-sufficient pretender.

Christian preaching is the disclosure of a system opposed to the world and its comparative views of the present and the future. Christianity is a religion which, while it teaches the impossibility of "serving two masters" of conflicting interests, teaches with no less decision the necessity of "choosing whom we will serve." It admits of no compromise with the world, that is, with principles, maxims, and practices, either directly unholy or plainly tending to produce or cherish unholy affections and habits. The character, interests, and purposes of the two are contrary ;

and “if any man will be a friend of the world,” the Scripture declares positively that “he is the enemy of God.” The Christian preacher must feel the spirit of Christianity, and so present it, that his hearers also may feel it. Oh! it is no cold, uninteresting, speculative system which he is to proclaim, but one thoroughly practical, adapted to advance the best feelings and energies of man, to raise him to the highest excellence of which his powers are capable, and to open before him new and unbounded fields for their exercise. And he who has not taken this view of Christianity, and on whose heart it has not made a lively and deep impression of this sort, is not fitted to serve in its courts, and is incompetent rightly to announce “Christ, the hope of glory.”

A full statement of what it is to preach the Gospel would comprehend much which the present occasion will not allow me to unfold. Jesus Christ himself must be the prominent object both of preacher and hearer. To represent him rightly in his essential character as Saviour, human sinfulness, in its origin, nature, and consequences, must be made prominent. Divine purity and its essential demands on all intelligent creation, must be fairly presented. The impossibility of self and the need of divine deliverance must be effectively taught. The character of the Christ, as the Great Teacher—as the once deeply humiliated but now gloriously exalted High Priest, in the celestial Holy of Holies, where “he ever liveth to make intercession”—as the one only and all-sufficient sacrifice; the nature and pervading influence of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, whom

the Saviour promised to send to his people ; these must be made known to the mind and the heart. The Church, the Lord's mystical body, "the fullness of him that filleth all in all," must be duly brought forward, together with the sacraments and institutions in the proper use of which divine grace is ordinarily conveyed. Regeneration, the commencement of Christian divine life, comprehending both the internal germ of a new creation in the conscious soul, and by water baptism the outward profession of it either as hereafter to exist or as previously conveyed, must be clearly stated, and the progressive development of the divine life in its advance in personal sanctification and preparation for heaven, be made the subject of delineation and frequent exhortation. All these Christian principles must be taught, illustrated, defended, inculcated, and applied to the mass of hearers, and repeated in proper variety of form and manner, that they may produce their intended practical effect on the character.

To do all this, reverend brethren and beloved, is to preach the gospel, to "declare" in reference to man "the whole counsel of God." Now let the question be duly considered—Can the whole gospel be preached in every discourse? Doubtless its leading and important principles, its general scheme, may be developed, and its acceptance confirmed or urged. But nothing can be more certain than the impossibility of thus doing justice to its comprehensive details, and of so presenting them as to make a right impression. The necessary consequence of such an attempt must be, to give vague and indefinite

views of Christianity, imparting general notions without any systematic and particular view of its truths. It necessarily leads to repetitions of the same unsatisfactory statements, leaving the hearers after years of public attendance not much wiser than before. And yet how common it is with some pious but mistaken Christians, to complain of the want of the Gospel in a sermon, because it does not contain all the necessary elements of evangelical truth. It is against this practical mistake that the prophet of God must set himself, if he means regularly to instruct to edification. Properly appreciating the several parts of the Christian system, he must present each according to its respective importance.

Superficial knowledge can produce nothing better than superficial preaching. Let me venture then, in directing my address to those of my hearers who have but recently entered into the ministry, and especially to those who are still preparing for admission, to make one or two suggestions by way of advice. They naturally grow out of or are in harmony with the views of Christian preaching already presented, which imply it to be not only hortatory but progressively instructive.

First, then, I would recommend that preparation for the pulpit be made with proper regard to regular instruction. The topics presented to a Christian audience should generally have some connection and mutual dependence. Series of discourses, starting from some general and fundamental point, proceeding in regular course of suc-

cession through various associated particulars, developing in greater or less degrees revealed truths, each constituting one portion of the great system, which becomes the more firmly fixed and settled in the mind and heart in proportion as each is proved, illustrated, and impressed, must produce a useful and permanent result. Such a method of pulpit instruction tends to keep awake the faculties both of preacher and hearer. It directs the former to subjects of reading, thought, meditation and prayer, so that he need never hesitate much in the choice of a suitable one. It gives an interest to the latter, rouses his mind, excites and fixes his attention, quickens and strengthens his memory, by bringing home to him the necessary union of all the various elements of the scheme of salvation. It is well adapted also to lead him to private reading, and especially to such a "searching of the Scriptures" as confirmed the sacred historian's eulogy of the "noble" character of the intelligent, inquiring and religiously disposed Bereans. I do not advise an undeviating adherence to such a course. Providential occurrences, either general or special, circumstances apparently incidental and fortuitous, private intercourse and conversation with individuals of a parish, the expediency of occasional variety and change, and other matters of a similar sort, must modify the application of what has been suggested. But, as a general principle, it can hardly fail, if acted on, to produce beneficial results.

In close connection with what has been said, I would also suggest the expediency and importance of expository

teaching. I cannot forbear expressing the opinion, that scriptural exposition is too much neglected. Let the occupant of the pulpit learn a lesson on this point from some of the fathers of the Church. To mention but one example, let him turn over the leaves of the thirteen ponderous tomes which constitute the works of the golden-mouthed Patriarch of Constantinople, and he will see that by far the larger proportion of them is filled with homilies expository of the sacred word. In urging the advice, I might repeat what has just been said on the influence of systematic preaching on both speaker and hearer. The Bible is read by multitudes, who have but very indefinite ideas of its contents. Let not the youthful minister of Christ hesitate on the ground that he does not feel perfectly adequate to undertake such exposition. Let him enter on it with respectable preparation, with devout prayer to "the fountain of all wisdom," and with humble confidence in the divine teacher. The very effort will itself increase his ability. The expository lecture of the next Sunday afternoon will afford him regular subject of study and reflection during a part and occasionally the whole of the week. Perseverance will soon show its practical effect on his Bible-class and Sunday-school exercises. In most cases, too, it will assist in forming habits of extemporaneous lecturing. By this I do not mean speaking without preparation, but the delivery of instructions previously thought over and carefully arranged in the mind so as to be preserved in the memory, and then clothed in the spontaneous language of nature, which is always ready to shape and express the clearly

formed sentiment. A few years of such steady practice would make most men competent to prepare in a few hours a useful expository lecture, with suitable hortatory conclusions.

Let me also suggest the importance of conveying the intended instruction in clear and definite language. This can never be done, unless the idea is itself clear and definite in the mind of the speaker. When an attempt is made to explain one obscure proposition by multiplying terms which do not dispel any mist that may dim the view to the thoughtful observer, we may be sure that the speaker's idea is not clear to himself. There are few rules more worthy of being habitually applied than the very simple one: "EXPLAIN TERMS." Had it always been acted on, the endless logomachies which have filled the Christian world with numerous volumes of controversy strongly marked by the *odium theologicum*, would have been compelled to give place to a greater measure of harmonious agreement in sentiment than has ever yet existed. If therefore the subject to be expounded is somewhat doubtful to the mind of the expositor, let it suffice him to say what he knows, and to leave the remainder in its continuing obscurity.

My younger brethren must bear with me, while I caution them against a practice which, although I fear it is not out of use, is, I have reason to hope, much less common than it once was. I mean that of procrastinating pulpit preparations until the near approach of the Lord's

day. Write no sermon in a hurry. Make it a rule, and adhere to it unless unavoidably prevented, to begin early in the week. Never willingly defer it until Saturday ; and least of all subject yourselves to what in early life I heard stated as a hard clerical annoyance, namely, to be finishing a sermon while the bell is ringing for Church. In justice to the memory of the good man who made the remark, I ought to add, that he was compelled to depend for a respectable livelihood on his daily drudgery as a schoolmaster, which consequently allowed him but little time for pulpit preparation. I speak now of pastors who are not so pressed, but are able, as all should be, to devote themselves exclusively to ministerial duty, and to depend for support on that "hire" of which the Lord himself affirms that such "laborers are worthy." To say all in one word, let the mind be bent on official obligation. Whether you "go about" or stay at home, let the governing principle of action and thought and reading be, to follow the Master and endeavor to "do good."

In conclusion, reverend brethren, let us all feel the design of Christian preaching as stated by one who, so far as we are able to judge, stands next to the great Prophet himself ; "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The perfection which he has in view is that of which man's nature is capable ; no chimerical notion, but such a character as Gospel instruction and discipline are adapted to advance. The Scriptures often use the word to express soundness of intellectual views on the subjects of revelation, and practice universally correspond-

ent. And while aiming to promote this, the servant of God is to keep in view the approach of that future period "when the chief Shepherd shall appear." And what an august occasion, Christian brethren, will that be! I seem, with the eye of faith, to look far away from the petty concerns of present existence onwards to that magnificent and overpowering scene, which shall then burst upon the view. And, amid the angels of heaven attending on the King of glory, amid the awful splendor of the varied ranks of celestial dignity, amid the "multitude which no man can number" of redeemed and holy spirits, amid the potentates of the world in all ages and their subjects of every class and character which swell the innumerable throng in unbounded succession, I see the faithful pastor presenting his little band to the great head of the unlimited family: Lord, here am "I, and the children whom thou hast given me!" I seem to myself to behold the Judge of the world, and to hear his voice: Approach, Christian minister! Thou hast toiled in obscurity, unknown to the world; thou shalt be rewarded publicly with the approbation of heaven. Approach! Thou wert "not ashamed of me" on earth; "I confess thee before the angels of God." Thou hast instructed the ignorant, thou hast reproved the sinner, thou hast cautioned the unwary, thou hast visited the sick, thou hast comforted the poor of my people, thou hast "turned many to righteousness;" I bid thee "shine forever and ever." Approach, Christian minister! Thou hast improved the talents which I committed to thee; thou hast done well as a "good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

“ O Holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal,” grant to all of us now assembled in thy name and presence, hereafter to hear thy welcome, and to fall at thy feet with joy unutterable ! Now, &c.

